

Recreational Fishing at Hydroelectric Developments

A 1996 survey by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service found that angling is a popular pastime in the United States. Almost 30 million Americans engaged in freshwater fishing and spent a total of 515 million days fishing. Projects licensed by FERC can often provide ideal destinations for these anglers. The reservoirs and streams at FERC-licensed hydroelectric developments have a combined water surface area of almost 2.5 million acres and shorelines totaling over 47,000 miles. At many of these projects, FERC and the licensees have been able to enhance the available fishing opportunities by building and maintaining tailwater fishing facilities, boat ramps, fishing docks and piers, visitor centers, and other amenities for anglers. Similarly, FERC works with the licensees to improve fishing opportunities by implementing measures that protect and enhance fisheries and habitats—such as controlling flow releases from dams, improving fish habitat, monitoring water quality and fish stocks, identifying any critical species or environment, and constructing fish passages when necessary. This combination of well-designed facilities and effective fisheries enhancement measures helps to ensure that FERC-licensed developments will continue to offer enjoyable recreational fishing for many years.

Where to Find More Information

For additional information about fishing opportunities at FERC-licensed projects, please visit the Office of Hydropower Licensing's homepage at

<http://www.ferc.fed.us/hydro/hydro2.htm>

You may also wish to contact or visit a FERC-licensed project in your area. Many licensees can provide project-specific information about fishing opportunities. A list of licensed projects is maintained on the FERC website.

If you prefer, you may contact Diana Shannon of the Office of Hydropower Licensing at (202) 208-7774.

Prepared by the
**FEDERAL ENERGY REGULATORY
COMMISSION**
Office of Hydropower Licensing



Date printed—August 1998

Recreational Fishing at Hydropower Projects



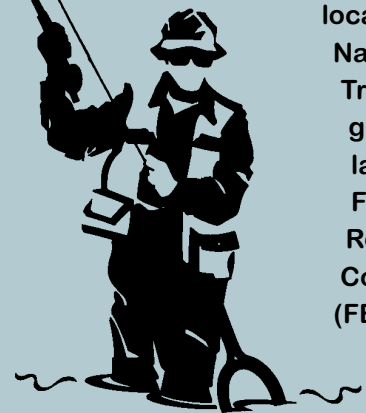
The Federal Energy Regulatory
Commission
Office of Hydropower Licensing

Introduction

The reservoirs, streams, and lands at many hydroelectric developments often provide outstanding recreational opportunities. A broad range of activities—from the challenge of whitewater rafting to the more leisurely pleasure of a picnic—ensures that casual visitors and serious enthusiasts alike will enjoy their valuable recreation time. Sportfishing can be a particularly important resource at some hydroelectric developments, and both new and experienced anglers are discovering the variety and quality of recreational fishing opportunities at those developments.

Most of these opportunities and facilities for recreational fishing have resulted from a closely cooperative effort among hydropower

developers, state and local governments, Native American Tribes, conservation groups, private landowners, and the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC).



The Role of FERC

FERC is an independent agency within the U.S. Department of Energy with broad responsibilities covering America's natural gas industry, electric utilities, hydroelectric projects, and oil pipelines. FERC's Office of Hydropower Licensing ensures that each licensed hydropower project has a comprehensive plan for improving or developing a waterway for the use or benefit of interstate or foreign commerce, water power, and other beneficial uses, including recreation.

FERC and the owners or developers of hydropower facilities cooperate to provide recreational fishing opportunities at the licensed projects. For example, many licensees prepare a recreational use plan for their

project; and FERC reviews and approves these plans to ensure that they respond to the recreational needs of the area. FERC also assists licensees with planning and managing recreational fishing opportunities by providing guidelines for

- ensuring public access,
- making project-specific information available to the public,
- incorporating sufficient lands within the project boundaries for optimum development of recreation resources, and
- protecting fish habitat.

FERC's Implementation Plan

In many ways, FERC benefits recreational fishing activities by carrying out the current responsibilities and obligations given to it by federal law. Those responsibilities were expanded in 1995 by Executive Order 12962, which directed federal agencies to "improve the quantity, function, sustainable productivity, and distribution of U.S. aquatic resources for increased recreational fishing opportunities." The Order also established the National Recreational Fisheries Coordination Council and directed the Council to develop a Recreational Fishery Resources Conservation Plan. The Plan, published in 1996, called on each federal agency to draft a plan describing the actions it would take to achieve the broad national goal of improving recreational fishing opportunities. In response, FERC prepared a Recreational Fisheries Implementation Plan to outline the efforts it will implement to achieve the goals of the Conservation Plan and the Executive Order. For instance, FERC is encouraging its licensees to enhance fishing opportunities at their projects. In addition,

FERC is developing a "fishing opportunities" page for the World

Wide Web site of the Office of Hydropower Licensing that will include information about recreational fishing opportunities. FERC also prepares and distributes public information, such as

this brochure, to encourage the use of FERC projects for recreational fishing.

